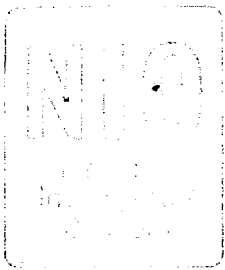


Office of the Director
of Central Intelligence
Approved For Release 2004/10/27 : CIA-RDP80M01048A000800330008-2



DATE: 15 February 1974

TO: The Director

SUBJECT: Contingency paper on the possible use
of air power by Hanoi in GVN MR 1

Attached is a draft memorandum which discusses
the consequences of Hanoi's using airpower in MR 1.

We have assumed that what you wanted was
basically a contingency study, a "what would happen
if --" paper. We have not discussed in any detail
the likelihood that NVN would actually use its air-
power in MR 1. The paper simply makes the unsupported
assertion that Hanoi is unlikely to do so in the
near future -- a judgment which DIA felt was essential
to include. If you want any further distribution
of the paper, it should probably be either explicitly
limited to discussing contingencies or we should
broaden the scope and discuss in some detail why
we believe Hanoi would or would not use its airpower
under each of the scenarios which we set forth.

DIA prepared the first draft of this, and the
present version has been coordinated with working
levels in INR, DIA, OCI, OER and EA/VNO. The draft
as it now stands is being given to you, Admiral de
Poix, and Bill Hyland -- but no distribution outside
the community. If you want to give it further
distribution, we will need more official chops
from DIA and INR than we now have.

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19 February 1974

JOINT MEMORANDUM*

SUBJECT: Consequences of North Vietnamese Use of
Airpower in South Vietnam's Military Region 1

KEY POINTS

Although we think it unlikely in the near future, if Hanoi should decide to use its aircraft over South Vietnam's Military Region (MR) 1 it might do so under three possible scenarios:

- Support for an all-out Communist offensive in South Vietnam.
- MIG incursions into South Vietnamese air space to test South Vietnamese and US reactions.
- Retaliatory raids in response to a South Vietnamese attack.

Under the latter two scenarios, the damage inflicted by the North Vietnamese air actions would be largely psychological.

Under the first scenario, the Danang Air Base and radar complex would probably be the initial targets. In the face of North Vietnamese air actions and their formidable AAA and SAM assets, South Vietnamese air operations in northern MR 1 would be costly; sustained operations in the area might be impossible, thereby denying South Vietnamese ground forces the advantage of close air support.

* This Memorandum has been prepared jointly by the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State, and the Central Intelligence Agency.

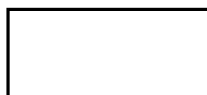
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The effectiveness of North Vietnamese airpower in support of ground operations would be limited. Even so, South Vietnamese ground troops are untested against air attack, and there would be a risk of battlefield disarray in some units.

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